

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-44 and add claims 45-88, as indicated below. A complete listing of claims pending in the application following entry of this Amendment are presented as follows:

1-44. (Cancelled)

45. (New) A method for manufacturing an article of footwear, the method comprising steps of:
providing a stratified material having a first layer and a second layer that are secured together;

forming an incision in the stratified material with a laser, the incision extending through the first layer to expose the second layer, and the incision segregating a first area of the first layer from a second area of the first layer;

removing the first area of the first layer by separating the first area of the first layer from the second layer; and

incorporating the stratified material into an upper of the article of footwear.

46. (New) The method recited in claim 45, further including a step of selecting the first layer and the second layer to have different properties.

47. (New) The method recited in claim 46, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be abrasion-resistance.

48. (New) The method recited in claim 46, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be air-permeability.

49. (New) The method recited in claim 46, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be flexibility.

50. (New) The method recited in claim 46, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be stretch-resistance.

51. (New) The method recited in claim 46, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be characteristics of the first layer and the second layer not including color.

52. (New) The method recited in claim 45, wherein the step of providing the stratified material includes selecting the stratified material to have a third layer, the second layer being positioned between the first layer and the third layer.

53. (New) The method recited in claim 52, wherein the step of forming the incision includes extending the incision through the second layer to also expose the third layer.

54. (New) The method recited in claim 52, further including a step of forming another incision that extends through each of the first layer and the second layer to expose an underlying portion of the third layer.

55. (New) The method recited in claim 45, further including a step of applying heat and pressure to the stratified material to bond the layers together, the step of applying heat and pressure being performed following the step of removing the first area of the first layer.

56. (New) A method for manufacturing an article of footwear, the method including steps of:
providing a stratified material having at least two layers that are secured together, the layers including a first layer and a second layer with different properties, the different properties being at least one of abrasion-resistance, air-permeability, flexibility, and stretch-resistance;
forming an incision in the stratified material with a laser, the incision extending through the first layer to expose the second layer; and
incorporating the stratified material into an upper of the article of footwear.

57. (New) The method recited in claim 56, wherein the step of forming the incision includes segregating a first area of the first layer from a second area of the first layer.

58. (New) The method recited in claim 57, further including a step of removing the first area of the first layer by separating the first area of the first layer from the second layer.

59. (New) The method recited in claim 56, wherein the step of forming the incision includes circumscribing an area of the first layer.

60. (New) The method recited in claim 59, further including a step of removing the area of the first layer by separating the area of the first layer from the second layer.

61. (New) The method recited in claim 56, wherein the step of providing the stratified material includes selecting the stratified material to have a third layer, the second layer being positioned between the first layer and the third layer.

62. (New) The method recited in claim 61, wherein the step of forming the incision includes extending the incision through the second layer to also expose the third layer.

63. (New) The method recited in claim 61, further including a step of forming another incision that extends through each of the first layer and the second layer to expose an underlying portion of the third layer.

64. (New) The method recited in claim 56, further including a step of applying heat and pressure to the stratified material to bond the layers together, the step of applying heat and pressure being performed following the step of forming the incision.

65. (New) A method for manufacturing an article of footwear, the method comprising steps of:
providing a stratified material having a first layer and a second layer that are non-permanently secured together;
forming an incision in the stratified material with a laser, the incision extending through the first layer to expose the second layer, and the incision segregating a first area of the first layer from a second area of the first layer;

removing the first area of the first layer by separating the first area of the first layer from the second layer;

permanently securing the first layer and the second layer together following removal of the first area; and

incorporating the stratified material into an upper of the article of footwear.

66. (New) The method recited in claim 65, wherein the step of permanently securing includes applying heat and pressure to the stratified material to bond the layers together.

67. (New) The method recited in claim 65, wherein the step of providing the stratified material includes applying an adhesive to an area between the first layer and the second layer.

68. (New) The method recited in claim 67, wherein the step of permanently securing includes curing the adhesive.

69. (New) The method recited in claim 65, further including a step of selecting the first layer and the second layer to have different properties.

70. (New) The method recited in claim 69, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be at least one of abrasion-resistance, air-permeability, flexibility, and stretch-resistance.

71. (New) The method recited in claim 69, wherein the step of selecting the first layer and the second layer includes choosing the different properties to be characteristics of the first layer and the second layer not including color.

72. (New) The method recited in claim 65, wherein the step of providing the stratified material includes selecting the stratified material to have a third layer, the second layer being positioned between the first layer and the third layer.

73. (New) The method recited in claim 72, wherein the step of forming the incision includes extending the incision through the second layer to also expose the third layer.

74. (New) The method recited in claim 72, further including a step of forming another incision that extends through each of the first layer and the second layer to expose an underlying portion of the third layer.

75. (New) A method for manufacturing an article of footwear, the method comprising steps of:
providing a stratified material having a first layer, a second layer, and a third layer that are secured together, the second layer being positioned between the first layer and the second layer;
forming a first incision in one side of the stratified material with a laser, the first incision extending through the first layer to expose the second layer;
forming a second incision in an opposite side of the stratified material, the second incision extending through the third layer to expose the second layer; and
incorporating the stratified material into an upper of the article of footwear.

76. (New) The method recited in claim 75, further including a step of selecting the first layer and the third layer to have different properties than the second layer.

77. (New) The method recited in claim 76, wherein the step of selecting includes choosing the different properties to be at least one of abrasion-resistance, air-permeability, flexibility, and stretch-resistance.

78. (New) The method recited in claim 76, wherein the step of selecting includes choosing the different properties to be characteristics of the first layer and the second layer not including color.

79. (New) The method recited in claim 75, further including a step of applying heat and pressure to the stratified material to bond the layers together, the step of applying heat and

pressure being performed following the steps of forming the first incision and forming the second incision.

80. (New) A method for manufacturing an article of footwear, the method comprising steps of:
providing a stratified material having a first layer, a second layer, and a third layer that
are secured together, the second layer being positioned between the first layer and
the second layer;

forming a first incision in the stratified material with a laser, the first incision extending
through the first layer to expose the second layer, and the first incision
segregating an area of the first layer from a remainder of the first layer;

removing the area of the first layer by separating the area of the first layer from a portion
of the second layer;

forming a second incision in the stratified material, the second incision extending through
the portion of the second layer to expose the third layer, and the second incision
segregating an area of the second layer from a remainder of the second layer;

removing the area of the second layer by separating the area of the second layer from a
portion of the third layer; and

incorporating the stratified material into an upper of the article of footwear.

81. (New) The method recited in claim 80, further including a step of selecting the first layer,
the second layer, and the third layer to have different properties.

82. (New) The method recited in claim 81, wherein the step of selecting includes choosing the
different properties to be at least one of abrasion-resistance, air-permeability, flexibility, and
stretch-resistance.

83. (New) The method recited in claim 81, wherein the step of selecting includes choosing the
different properties to be characteristics of the first layer and the second layer not including
color.

84. (New) The method recited in claim 80, wherein the step of providing the stratified material includes non-permanently securing the layers together.

85. (New) The method recited in claim 84, further including a step of permanently securing the first layer and the second layer together following removal of the area of the second layer.

86. (New) The method recited in claim 85, wherein the step of permanently securing includes applying heat and pressure to the stratified material to bond the layers together.

87. (New) The method recited in claim 84, wherein the step of providing the stratified material includes applying an adhesive between the first layer and the second layer and between the second layer and the third layer.

88. (New) The method recited in claim 87, wherein the step of permanently securing includes curing the adhesive.